

37th STREET SE MEETING NOTES - March 31, 2009



On March 31, 2009 the City of Auburn Mayor and City staff met with residents of 37th Street SE at Mt. Baker Middle School, 620 37th Street SE, to discuss neighborhood concerns.

Staff in Attendance: MAYOR PETE LEWIS, COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER DUANNA RICHARDS, COMMUNITY SERVICES PROJECT ASSISTANT KIRSTEN REYNOLDS, POLICE CHIEF JIM KELLY, SENIOR PLANNER KAREN SCHARER, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS VOLUNTEERS ANNA MARSHALL AND ALISHA THOMLEN, TRAFFIC ENGINEER PABLO PARA, PARKS PLANNING & DEV. MGR. BOB WUOTILA, SOLID WASTE CUSTOMER CARE KATHLEEN EDMAN AND CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER MIKE DUNBAR

Community Members in Attendance: DARIN ADAMS, MAIRA GOLDSBY, GORDON MARTINDALE, COY MASSIE, DAN AND COLLEEN PAYNE, DENNIS AND MERRILON GRONHOLDS, ALLEN AND LINDA GEISZLER, STEVE FISHER, PAT AND RAY COADY, JERRIE DIDDY, SARA BRAND, LYNN AND DICK REMILLARD, DENISE AND JERRY KING, HILDE HUME, ANGELIQUE MOSER AND JEFFERY TAN

Welcome and Introductions

Mayor Pete Lewis welcomed everyone, thanked them for attending and asked City staff to introduce themselves. Mayor Lewis then indicated the primary purpose of the meeting was for the City to listen to the residents' concerns, respond to questions they could answer immediately and identify items for follow up. The City takes notes of the meeting, which are then sent out to the attendees.

Mayor Lewis facilitated the meeting and discussed the following topics:

- ***Mayor's Update*** -- residents were encouraged to sign up for the Mayor's Update, an e-newsletter Mayor Lewis sends out every Friday about what's taken place in the City during the week, upcoming events, etc. He also uses the listserv to send out alerts about road closures, emergencies, etc. as a way to keep the community informed. Since this is a listserv, if you decide you don't want to continue receiving it you can unsubscribe at any time.

General Questions/Comments

- ***Will Auburn be following and implementing Seattle's recycling program?***
Mayor Lewis explained Seattle's recycling program is mandatory; if recycling is found in the garbage individuals could be fined. The City of Auburn's garbage pick up is mandatory, recycling and composting is voluntary.

Public Safety Related Questions/Comments

- There are on-going problems with residents living on 29th and K, L and M Streets. Problems include people parking their cars on the grass, groups of people gathering and constant partying. Mayor Lewis suggested residents call 9-1-1 and report on-going issues; 9-1-1 tapes can be pulled if there isn't a response to the calls.
- ***If you have a problem or see anything suspicious call 9-1-1!***
Residents were encouraged to report everything to 9-1-1. The citizens of Auburn own the 9-1-1 system. You should call 9-1-1 whenever you have an emergency, feel something suspicious is going on, need to speak with an officer or file a report (online reporting is also available www.auburnwa.gov/Emergency/Police/Citizen_Online_Police_Reporting.asp)

if you would prefer to file your report that way). **PLEASE NOTE:** If calling from a cell phone you need to ask for an “Auburn Call Receiver.”

Auburn shares ownership of the 9-1-1 system with other South King County cities and the calls go to a dispatch center so residents shouldn't worry about tying up the phone line when making non-emergency calls. When you call 9-1-1 it will be answered by a “Call Receiver.” The Call Receiver will determine whether or not your call is an emergency to be handled right away or to have an officer make contact with you to file a non-emergency report. They will ask questions which are specifically designed to obtain information so that the proper response can be made for your call.

If you want to know what the officer finds out be sure to let the Call Receiver know you DO want to be contacted by the officer when they've completed their investigation.

In addition to emergency issues, residents should also call Auburn 9-1-1 for non-emergency issues such as street lights out, stop lights out, missing stop signs, fireworks, loose dogs, sewer backups, water leaks, etc. An alternative is to report them via the City website. The link is under Online Services at the top of the page and is called Online Citizen Report (half way down): **www.auburnwa.gov/Business/public_works/Online_Citizen_Report.asp**.

The more calls the Police receive about on-going problem the more responses residents should be receiving. Auburn has hired 36 new officers that allowed the force to be more pro-active in the neighborhoods.

- ***What is Block Watch?***

Block Watch is built on the concept of neighbors watching out for each other because you know better than anyone else who belongs in your neighborhood and who doesn't. If you think “maybe I should call 9-1-1 about this,” you should. Residents were encouraged to set up a Block Watch. Once the group is formed, Community Programs Officer Andy Gould will come out to do a formal training on what to watch for, how to react and how to get neighborhood participation. Groups are encouraged to get together several times a year to maintain an active group.

- ***How can I be prepared for emergencies?***

Emergency Preparedness Volunteer Anna Marshall gave a brief presentation regarding programs citizens can participate in to prepare their homes, families and neighborhoods in case of disaster. The Emergency Preparedness Division offers Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training; it is an eight week hands-on practice in such topics as first aid, triage and survival skills. Another program discussed was Map Your Neighborhood, which is now being combined with the Block Watch training. Neighbors are taught how to get organized before a disaster happens. Generalized disaster preparedness training is also available to interested community groups and organizations. To schedule any of these classes for your neighborhood, contact their office at (253) 876-1925 or e-mail emergencyprep@auburnwa.gov; you can also visit their website to see a training schedule: <http://www.auburnwa.gov/disaster>.

Streets/Sewer/Traffic Related Questions/Comments

- ***Who do we call when traffic lights are out?***

When traffic lights go out it is important for people to call it in to the Auburn 9-1-1 system. Once the call has been made, the City can do something to fix it, otherwise we may not know about the outage.

- ***Can the speed limit be lowered on Auburn Way South, to/from the Casino?***
Residents expressed concern that 45 mph was too fast coming to/from the Muckleshoot Indian Casino. Mayor Lewis explained this is actually State Route 164 so it's owned by the State of Washington and the City of Auburn has no control to change or regulate anything.
- ***Why aren't there any lights on Highway 18?***
Mayor Lewis explained Highway 18 is also owned by the State of Washington. The City is aware this has been an on-going issue for the past 20 years, but Auburn has no control.
- ***What is the speed limit if it's not posted?***
When the speed limit isn't posted it's always 25 mph in the city of Auburn.
- ***What can be done about residential swimming pools not being taken care of?***
There is a nasty pool that has filled up with algae and frogs. Residents have reported it to the Health Department. The house is located on a dead end street off of 28th, between M Street and R Street. Staff will look at the City Code to see if anything can be enforced.
- ***Can the City treat storm ponds to prevent the West Nile Virus?***
The City is not allowed to put anything in storm ponds to control this unless there is proof the specific type of mosquito that causes West Nile Virus is actually present. Per Washington State law the City is not allowed to touch private areas at all.

Code Enforcement Related Questions/Comments

- ***What can be done about dilapidated homes?***
Complaints about dilapidated homes, junk cars, garbage, etc. should be called in to the Code Enforcement Officers at (253) 931-3090.
- ***What should residents do if they have graffiti?***
Graffiti should be removed as quickly as possible. The quicker residents can react by removing graffiti the better the chance to decrease the presence of a gang and/or troubled youth behavior. Gangs have been known to use graffiti to mark their territory for recruitment and claiming turf.

Property owners and neighborhoods repetitively struggle with this issue. City Code requires property owners to remove graffiti within 15 days; a new Graffiti Removal Assistance Program was created in partnership with Parker Paint to help property owners take action. If neighborhoods are having graffiti problems they should call the City's Code Enforcement Division to report the problem at (253) 931-3090 or call the new Graffiti Hotline (253) 931-3048 Ext. 7, the officer will open a case and call your information into Parker Paint. Residents can go to the Parker Paint in Auburn and pick up supplies to cover the graffiti.

City Council enacted a spray paint law that doesn't allow anyone under 18 years old to purchase spray paint. Individuals caught near a graffiti site with graffiti tools may also be subject to arrest under a new Council ordinance. Another program being explored is to have juveniles previously caught doing graffiti participate in community service specifically focused on graffiti clean up.

- ***Are kids being educated on consequences of graffiti?***
Mt. Baker Principal Darin Adams reported kids are being educated on the consequences of graffiti. Graffiti has been down thanks to residents reporting it and the school being proactive in removing it. Mt. Baker is the largest Middle School in the Auburn School District

with 900 students; residents were encouraged to call the school if they see kids doing anything bad.

Development Related Questions/Comments

- ***What's happening in the Downtown area?***

Mayor Lewis talked about planned activity for six different blocks in the Downtown. The City has assembled 26 parcels to promote development and is focusing on making Downtown an Urban Center that will promote retail on the ground level and residential space above. Walkways would connect Main Street shops to the new development. Auburn worked with 17 owners for the last five years to promote development for six different blocks in Downtown.

One block owned by the Auburn Regional Hospital is where a parking garage is being built. The old tavern block was demolished to make way for a new Professional Plaza. There are plans to develop the Marvel Foods block and others in the area. The Cavanaugh block has been on the market, the City will make sure whatever gets built will tie in with the surrounding plans.

- **Why is parking in Downtown so difficult?**

The City is requiring more parking to be built along with all/any new development. Right now a 300 stall parking garage is underway that will help immensely with the parking supply.

Another helpful piece would be to have Sound Transit built their second 450-stall parking garage which has always been intended to be built on the C Street side of the railroad tracks. With the passage of the Sound Transit's ballot measure in fall 2008, it might actually happen sometime in the future.

The 100 permit only parking spaces in the current Sound Transit garage were originally paid for by the downtown businesses when the garage was built; the City asked if some of these spaces could be leased back to rent out to commuters and that's currently being done.

The City did add surface parking areas for commuters to use with permits. Auburn initiated a shuttle service leaving from Lakeland Hills to help get commuters to the Sound Transit Station. The new shuttle service has been successful.

- **Which lots are permit parking and which are public parking on Main Street?**

The permit parking lot signage is very confusing; it would be nice to have some clarity. Staff will verify when and where permit parking ends and clarify what lots will allow for parking after 6 p.m.

Summary of Solutions Discussed/Action Items

1. There is a nasty pool that someone has let fill up with algae and frogs located on a dead end Street off of 28th Street between M Street and R Street. Staff will look at the City Code to see if anything can be enforced on this subject.
2. Staff will verify when and where permit parking ends and clarify what lots will allow for parking after 6 p.m. in the Downtown area.

Community Services Team Contact Information:

- Duanna Richards, Community Services Manager, (253) 931-3099, or drichards@auburnwa.gov
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